

The labors of Gessner in botany, both on account of the unfinished state in which he left the application of his principles, and on account of the absence of any principles manifestly applicable to the whole extent of the vegetable kingdom, can only be considered as a prelude to the epoch in which those defects were supplied. To that epoch we now proceed.

*Sect. 2.—Epoch of Cæsalpinus.—Formation of a System of Arrangement.*

IF any one were disposed to question whether Natural History truly belongs to the domain of Inductive Science;—whether it is to be prosecuted by the same methods, and requires the same endowments of mind as those which lead to the successful cultivation of the Physical Sciences,—the circumstances under which Botany has made its advance appear fitted to remove such doubts. The first decided step in this study was merely the construction of a classification of its subjects. We shall, I trust, be able to show that such a classification includes, in reality, the establishment of one general principle, and leads to more. But without here dwelling on this point, it is worth notice that the person to whom we owe this classification, Andreas Cæsalpinus of Arezzo, was one of the most philosophical men of his time, profoundly skilled in the Aristotelian lore which was then esteemed, yet gifted with courage and sagacity which enabled him to weigh the value of the Peripatetic doctrines, to reject what seemed error, and to look onwards to a better philosophy. “How are we to understand,” he inquires, “that we must proceed from universals to particulars (as Aristotle directs), when particulars are better known?”<sup>6</sup> Yet he treats the Master with deference, and, as has been observed,<sup>7</sup> we see in his great botanical work deep traces of the best features of the Aristotelian school, logic and method; and, indeed, in this work he frequently refers to his *Quæstiones Peripateticæ*. His book, entitled *De Plantis libri xvi.* appeared at Florence in 1583. The aspect under which his task presented itself to his mind appears to me to possess so much interest, that I will transcribe a few of his reflections. After speaking of the splendid multiplicity of the productions of nature, and the confusion which has hitherto prevailed among writers on plants,

<sup>6</sup> *Quæstiones Peripateticæ*, (1569,) lib. i. quæst. i.

<sup>7</sup> Cuvier, p. 198.